

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6946

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL IZMIR

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, TU

SUBJ: STUDENT VIOLENCE: POLICE CLASH WITH LEFTIST

DEMONSTRATORS

REF: ISTANBUL 147

1. STUDENT VIOLENCE, WHICH HAS BEEN LIMITED TO SPORADIC INCIDENTS SINCE MOST OF ISTANBUL'S MAJOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WERE RECESSED IN MID- JANUARY , FLARED UP JANUARY 27 WHEN POLICE CLASHED WITH LEFTIST DEMONSTRATORS FROM STATE FINE ARTS ACADEMY. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, SEVERAL HUNDRED LEFTIST STUDENTS HELD AN EARLY AFTERNOON FORMUM JAN 27 AT THE FINE ARTS ACADEMY IN ISTANBUL'S TOPHANE DISTRICT TO PROTEST DEATH THE PREVIOUS NIGHT OF OZER ELMAS, ONE OF TWO LEFTISTS AMBUSHED (ALLEGEDLY BY RIGHTWING COMMANDOS) JAN 12 AT ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY. (REFTEL) SPEAKERS USED FORUM TO CONDEMN KILLING OF THREE "ANARCHISTS" BY POLICE AND JANDARMA FORCES IN MALATYA JAN 26

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AS THE WORK OF THE FACIST DEMIREL GOVERNMENT. FOLLOWING MEETING,

STUDENTS CARRYING PLACARDS COMMENCED PROTEST MARCH WHICH WAS CUT SHORT AT TOPHANE BY POLICE REINFORCED BY ARMORED RIOT VEHICLES. WHEN STUDENTS REPORTEDLY REFUSED TO DISPERSE, POLICE USED SMOKE AND TEAR GAS GRENADES. GUN FIRE ENSUED, AND BY TIME LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES HAD SITUATION UNDER CONTROL KEMAL ARIKAN, A CLUDENT AGIANKARA ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE, HAD BEEN KILLED AND SEVERAL OTHERS ON SCENE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, INCLUDING TWO POLICEMEN AND TWO PASSERS-BY. THE SCHOOL HAS BEEN RECESSED UNTIL FEB.2.

2. COMMENT: YESTERDAY'S CLASH IS SIGNIFICANT IN THAT IT IS, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, FIRST INSTANCE IN LATEST CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN WHICH A GROUP OF MILITANT LEFTISTS HAS DIRECTLY CONFRONTED POLICE. IN THE PAST POLICE INVOLVEMENT HAS USUALLY OCCURRED THROUGH INTERVENTION IN LEFT-RIGHT CLASHES, AND IN MOST CASES DEMONSTRATORS HAVE CHOSEN TO DISPERSE RATHER THAN PROVOKE ARMORED UNITS INTO SERIOUS ACTION. IN ADDITION LEFT REPORTEDLY HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO CHALLENGE SECURITY AUTHORITIES DIRECTLY IN VIEW OF HARSH TREATMENT LEFTISTS RECEIVED AT THE HANDS OF THE 1971-73 MARIIAL LAW REGIME. THEREFORE, WHILE ALLOWING FOR FACT THAT JAN 27 CLASH MAY HAVE BEEN MIS-CALCULATION ON PART OF DEMONSTRATORS AND OVER-REACTION BY POLICE, THIS

CONFRONTATION MAY ALSO SIGNAL A CHANGE IN MILITANT LEFT'S PASSIVITY AND ITS INTENT TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT'S "GET TOUGH" POLICY.

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